



# COLLEGE LIFE



## College Students Primed For Financial Independence

(NAPSA)—Whether it's earning income from a summer job or working part-time during the school year, a growing number of college students are enjoying more financial freedom. Are they ready for the responsibility that comes with this independence?

According to a recent survey by Student Monitor, 93 percent of students reported some income during the previous year, with average annual earnings of \$5,100. Fifty-two percent own a general-purpose credit card in their name. Nearly half (47 percent) of those who don't have a credit card said they are interested in acquiring one within the next year.

To ensure these new credit users stay on track to a healthy financial future, Citibank created the Credit-ED<sup>SM</sup> program to provide the ongoing support and guidance they need to spend wisely. Students—and parents—can access a wealth of free information at [www.UseCreditWisely.com](http://www.UseCreditWisely.com) to help them make smart financial decisions and develop sound personal finance skills that will benefit them in college and beyond.

The site offers essential money management advice to help college students develop and maintain good credit. Important first steps, says credit expert Bill Borden, Senior Vice President, Citi Cards, include shopping around for the best credit card terms, setting and sticking to a monthly budget and paying credit card bills promptly and in full to minimize finance charges.

Credit is a powerful tool—but it's also a big responsibility.



**According to a recent survey, 52 percent of college students surveyed already have a general purpose credit card.**

Whether on campus, studying abroad or traveling on vacation, students need to take precautions to protect their credit. Borden offers the following tips to safeguarding personal information from falling into the wrong hands:

- Never lend credit cards to anyone.
- Never leave cards or receipts lying around.
- Always check receipts against monthly statements.
- Get a credit card with added security features, like a photo, or virtual account numbers that take the place of real account numbers when shopping online.
- Record card numbers, expiration dates and phone numbers, and keep this information in a safe place separate from cards.
- Carry only the cards needed, especially when traveling.

For more advice on preventing fraud and other ways to use credit to your advantage, visit [www.UseCreditWisely.com](http://www.UseCreditWisely.com).